

REMARKS

Claims 25-30 and 33-43 (the method claims) are pending after the amendment.

Applicant will submit formal drawings upon receiving a Notice of Allowance.

Generally, the Examiner rejected all of the method Claims 25-30 and 33-43 as being obvious over various combinations of Brossard, Forbes, Luciano, Walker, and Acres.

Applicant's invention of independent Claim 25 includes the limitations of selectively illuminating lamps on a plurality of linked gaming machines in a coordinated manner to indicate to players that the gaming machines are linked and share a common feature. Applicant's invention is particularly useful where linked machines are scattered around a casino and it is not apparent that the machines are available to play a competitive jackpot game (or other shared feature), for example. As seen, Applicant's invention has a practical and important function.

On page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner insisted on Applicant proving the invention is critical by supplying an affidavit showing unexpected results. It is respectfully submitted that such an affidavit is not appropriate here. Unexpected results are not required in this situation for patentability.

It is not disputed by the Examiner that none of the prior art discloses linked gaming machines where lamps on the gaming machines are illuminated in a coordinated manner to show that the machines are linked and share a common feature. In fact, none of the cited discloses anything whatsoever relating to a coordinated control of linked gaming machines to show to players that they are linked and share a common feature.

Brossard, Forbes, and Luciano do not disclose linked gaming machines so could not suggest the invention. Walker was cited simply for its disclosure of linked gaming machines and provides no other disclosure of significance. The newly cited Acres patent was cited for its disclosure of an overhead display common to various linked gaming machines, proximate to the overhead display, where the overhead display depicts a storm to get players excited about a jackpot game. Col. 19, lines 30-33, of the Acres patent discloses that the storm is depicted on overhead panels. This general concept of conveying information with an

overhead display is conventional and would not convey to players scattered around the casino that certain gaming machines scattered around the casino were part of the jackpot game. Acres does not at all suggest to coordinate the illumination of lamps on the linked gaming machines, as recited in Claim 25. Further, Applicant's invention accomplishes a purpose very different from the Acres overhead display.

Based on the complete lack of prior art disclosure regarding the invention of Claim 25, it is respectfully submitted that there is no suggestion for Applicant's invention


Accordingly, Applicant's method Claims 25-30 and 33-43 are respectfully submitted to be patentable.

The examiner objected to the drawings as not meeting the formal requirements of the PTO (lines not uniformly thick). Applicant will submit formal drawings after an indication that the claims are allowable.


Regarding the system Claims 1-11 and 13-24 (now cancelled), the Examiner had the additionally reason for nonpatentability being that the prior art machines are "capable" of operating as claimed even though they are not operated in the claimed manner. Such a grounds for rejection does not apply to the method claims. Additionally, being able to selectively control the lamps on linked gaming machines requires special software and hardware. It is respectfully submitted that the prior art systems do not have the required hardware and software to operate the lamps as claimed in the cancelled claims.

In view of the above arguments, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of all pending claims. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (408) 382-0480 ext. 202.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on the date shown below.


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2/4/05
Date

Respectfully submitted,


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